

Pilgrimage Tourism in Asian Countries

Khaydarov Abdulaziz¹

Abstract: In this article, given information about Asian countries and their pilgrimage tourism, updated statistics and types of most popular pilgrimage tourist places in different countries will be discussed. Apart from this, pilgrimage sites and their shortcomings, solutions to problems and the impact of pilgrimage tourism on tourism sphere are discussed.

Key words: Pilgrimage Tourism, Religious Tourism, UNWTO, Halal Tourism, Shariah Tourism, Holy places, Sacred places.

Introduction: Pilgrimage tourism plays essential role in International and National Tourism Sphere. Pilgrimage tourism is a sort of tourism that people can visit various pilgrimage destinations. Pilgrimage sites are important to many religious faiths, providing space where visitors can enter the realm of the sacred and connect to their faith at a deeper level. An important part of the pilgrimage experience is that of travelling to another place, sometimes in the company of fellow believers, and leaving behind the familiar comforts of home. Pilgrimage tourism has taken the place when down of civilization. Tourism to sacred sites has merged in the past before 2,000 years.

The Asia-Pacific region is considered the world's religious core with the greatest number of pilgrims and travellers for religious events, for both international and domestic tourism. It is estimated that there are approximately six hundred million national and international religious and spiritual voyages in the world, of which 40% take place in Europe and over half in Asia. According to UNESCO, 60% of the world's population practises a religion and these believers form the demographic base of religious tourism. This study has therefore clearly identified areas of interest that appeal to the religious aspects of travel and it is the responsibility of tourism administrators and travel professionals to glean this information and look at religious tourism as a resource in the same light as the sun.

When talking about the importance of Pilgrimage tourism, we can divide into two parts. Initially why pilgrimage tourism is important for people? Secondly why sacred places are necessary? Pilgrimages are so important for people, in order to feel religious fillings, gathering knowledge regarding religious places people can travel to pilgrimage sites. During their travel to pilgrimage sites, they are able to increase the connection with God or in case they have a problem with their life, work, family; you name it, they can pray to God in order to solve their problems. They can understand their religions in order to travel to religious places. The good sides of pilgrimage tourism for country is religious places are the famous places of the country and in many cases contribute to increasing the flow of tourists to this country. Because religious places attract many local and international tourists, they have a positive effect on the economy of the state. In addition, religious monuments and sites are evidence that clearly shows the history of this country and what kind of country it is. Due to the large number of tourists in religious places, jobs will be created due to the expansion of certain types of caps and their functions, which is of course a great benefit for the state.

"According to UNWTO estimates, 300 to 330 million tourists visit the world's key religious sites every year, with approximately 600 million national and international religious voyages in the world, 40% of which take place in Europe. Being key tourism destinations, religious heritage sites not only drive international tourism and economic growth, but also provide important meeting grounds for visitors and host communities, making vital contributions to tolerance, respect and mutual understanding between different cultures"

Pilgrimage Tourism in Arabian Countries-As implied by the name, pilgrimage tourism in Islamic nations primarily appeals to Muslims, although it may also be appealing to non-Muslims for a variety of reasons, such as reasonable costs, safety and security, a welcoming environment for families, and hygienic conditions. a pilgrimage to Islam. In tourist theory and practice, the term "tourism" has been used with a variety of titles and meanings. Muslim-friendly tourism, halal tourism, and shariah tourism are some of the most frequent words that are interchangeable. None of these jargons, nevertheless, is broadly understood. The services in this industry are also referred to using words like "Halal hospitality," "Sharia'h compatible hotels," and "Halal friendly travel."

What is the Islam? Islam is the second largest religion in the world after Christianity, with about 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide. Although its roots go back a long way, scholars generally date the emergence of Islam to the 7th century, making it the youngest of the major world religions. Islam began in the city of Mecca in present-day Saudi Arabia during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad. Today, the faith is spreading rapidly throughout the world

¹ Student Of "Silk Road" International University Of Tourism And Cultural Heritage 4th Course

Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Center, Sheikh Zayed Mosque – Fujairah, Al Bidya Mosque, Al Noor Mosque, Al Salam Mosque and other pilgrimage places located in Arabian Countries. However in Arabian countries Hajj and going to Medina is too important among local and International tourists. According to the World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) recently released Tourism Barometer, the Hajj pilgrimage has helped Saudi Arabia's tourism industry grow exponentially by 121% compared to pre-pandemic international tourism.

The UNWTO also revealed a list of the Arab nations that have received the most tourists this year. More than 18 million tourists visited Saudi Arabia in 2022, followed by the United Arab Emirates (14.8 million) and Morocco (11.1 million), according to recently disclosed statistics. Syria deserves special attention among the listed nations since, despite the challenging circumstances the nation has been facing for more than a decade, it attracts about 8.5 million visitors annually, ranking it as the fourth-highest tourism destination in the Arab world.

Pilgrimage Tourism and Destinations in China, Japan and Korea

China- The country of China is multi-religious. China's dominant religions are Taoism, Buddhism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism. In China, there are millions of Buddhists, who practice a religion that dates back thousands of years. Protestantism and Catholicism were introduced in the late Qing Dynasty along with Taoism, which is the national religion. In China, there are numerous well-known religious sites. The Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, The Longmen Grottoes, The Yungang Grottoes and other pilgrimage places. However, Qufu and Confucius. Thanks to its connections with Confucius, China's most revered philosopher, the small town of Qufu in southwest Shandong has long been one of the country's most important places of pilgrimage.

South Korea-All four of the world's main religions—Confucianism, Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity—coexist happily in South Korea with shamanism. In 2015, statistics showed that 44% of South Koreans identified as members of a religion. Among these, Buddhism and Confucianism have had the greatest impact on the lives of the Korean people. In fact, these two faiths account for more than half of the countries officially recognized cultural legacy. Tens of thousands of temples have been constructed all throughout Korea since Buddhism first arrived in the nation in 372. South Korea is rapidly changing into a multiethnic, multicultural, and multi-religious society, they have a chance and they are able to choose their religion Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Catholicity or other ones. However most of the people who live in Korea are irreligious. According to 2015 national census, 56.1% are irreligious, Protestantism represents (19.7%) of the total population, Korean Buddhism (15.5%), and Catholicism (7.9%). A small percentage of South Koreans (0.8% in total) are members of other religions are Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Catholicity, Daejongism, Daesun and others. Pomsa, Pulguksa, Jogyesa, Naksansa, Txondosa and Mihwangsa are so popular pilgrimage places in South Korea.

What is the Irreligious? The term irreligion refers to a spectrum of non-religious belief systems, including secular humanism, agnosticism, atheism, and antitheism. It covers beliefs that are simply indifferent to religion, that reject religion, and that are hostile to religion. Irreligion is partly defined by cultural context. Today, atheism is the most common understanding of irreligion. Irreligion is increasing in popularity worldwide. According to a global poll taken in 2017, 25% of people claim they are not religious and an additional 9% are convinced atheists, with percentages in these categories increasing every time a poll is taken. A survey conducted in 2012 showed that 36 percent of the world's population are not religious. Interestingly, irreligion does not necessarily coincide with a rejection of the church. Some countries that have high irreligion rates, like Sweden and Albania (over 50 percent for both countries) also show a high percentage of the population affirming that they are part of a religious group—Lutheran and Muslim for those two countries, respectively.

Japan- In Japan exist two major religions. Shinto is as old as the Japanese culture, while Buddhism was imported from the mainland in the 6th century. Since then, the two religions have been co-existing relatively harmoniously and have even complemented each other to a certain degree. Most Japanese consider themselves Buddhist, Shintoist or both. Religion does not play a big role in the everyday life of most Japanese people today. The origins of Japanese Buddhism can be traced back to the early sixth century, when the king of Paekche, occupying the southwestern tip of the Korean peninsula, sent a small bronze statue and Buddhist texts as part of a diplomatic mission to the Japanese court. This cultural exchange marked the beginning of a leading religion that would continue to develop over the following centuries in Japan.

Today-Dzi, Nikko Tosyo-Gu, Sensodzi, Dzenkodzi, Byodo-In, Idzumo-Taysya and other religious places are located in Japan. However, Meji shrine, Sensoji Temple, Fushimi Inare Shime are most touristic places in Japan for religious tourism.

Pilgrimage Tourism in India- India is one of the largest religiously pluralistic and multiethnic democracy country in the world. In India 1.4 billion people, which are almost one-sixth of the world's population. India is mor religiously and ethnically diverse nations in the world, with some of the most deeply religious societies and cultures. Almost 94% Hindus people live in India. There are Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Jains and other regions live in India as well.

Tirupati, Shirdi, Somnath Temple, Golden Temple, Vaisho Devi Temple, Rameshwaram, Rishikesh and other pilgrimage places are too popular among tourists.

What is the Buddhism? - Buddhism is a faith that was founded by Siddhartha Gautama ("the Buddha") more than 2,500 years ago in India. With about 470 million followers, scholars consider Buddhism one of the major world religions. Its practice has historically been most prominent in East and Southeast Asia, but its influence is growing in the West.

Pilgrimage Tourism in Uzbekistan-Main religion in Uzbekistan is Islam, but it is a secular state, where representatives of different religions and confessions live together in harmony. According to the official data, today there are 2225 registered

religious organizations, 16 different religious confessions. This varied ethnic image of Uzbekistan states that there is high tolerance to the issue of religion in the country. The Constitution of Uzbekistan protects religious freedom. Everyone shall have the right to profess or not to profess any religion. Sunni Islam is the dominant religion in Uzbekistan consisting 93% of the population of the country except for 1% of Shia Muslims mostly living on the territory of Bukhara and Samarkand. Christianity is the other religion with most followers having its both streams: Orthodox (4%) and Catholicism (3%). On the territory of Uzbekistan, there are many religious places belonging to Islamic culture. The most valuable monuments are recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Among them is Bukhara city, called as second name Bukhara-Sharif, which means Blessed Bukhara. Apart from this In Samarkand there are a number of holy places and monuments.

Great Minaret of the Kalon, Gur Emir Mausoleum, Bibi Khanym Mosque, Tillya Kori Madrasah, Mir-i-Arab Madrasa, Teleshayakh Mosque and other religious sites are located in Uzbekistan.

Apart from this In Uzbekistan, there are more than 10 places of pilgrimage that are sacred and revered by Christians and Muslims. Until modern times, on the territory of Uzbekistan there are revered by both Christians and Muslims "springs of Job", the most famous of which is located in Bukhara. The Orthodox Church in Uzbekistan is beginning to form along with the arrival of the Russian Orthodox Church in Central Asia after the annexation of the main part of this region to the Russian Empire and the formation of the Turkestan General government (1867).

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